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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/767,798	01/29/2004	Neil G. Murray JR.	TRW(TE)6888	7228
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TAROLLI, SUNDHEIM, COVELL & TUMMINO L.L.P. 1300 EAST NINTH STREET, SUITE 1700 CLEVEVLAND, OH 44114			VERBITSKY, GAIL KAPLAN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2859	

DATE MAILED: 03/13/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/767,798	Applicant(s) MURRAY ET AL.	
	Examiner Gail Verbitsky	Art Unit 2859	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 December 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 12-21 and 24-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 12-21 and 24-26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-5, 7, 13-16, 18, 20, 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones et al. (U.S. 20040056006) [hereinafter Jones] in view Shepard (U.S. 6585146), Dostoomian et al. (U.S. 4359622) [hereinafter Dostoomian] and Chang et al. (U.S. 4792683) [hereinafter Chang].

Jones discloses in Fig. 1 a device/ method in the field of applicant's endeavor comprising welding of two abutted (clamped together) plastic pieces 1, 2 to form a weld. The piece (second plastic piece) 1 may be transmissive/ transparent to an IR radiation ([0035]) from the radiation beam 4 (paragraph [0033]) from a radiation source/ laser 5. The piece (first plastic piece) 2 can comprises a radiation absorbing material ([0018], [0034]).

Jones does not explicitly teach to collect thermal radiation passing through the second piece. Jones does not teach obtaining a thermal image/ thermal data) of the weld. Jones does not teach obtaining a feedback signal, and modifying heating in response to the feedback signal. Jones does not teach to collect thermal radiation passing through the second piece. Jones does not teach to simultaneously with the

heating (welding) collect thermal radiation, in combination with the remaining limitations of claims 1-5, 7, 13-16, 18, 20, and 26.

Shepard discloses in Fig. 1 a device/ method for monitoring quality of weld 106 being formed between first and second pieces (surfaces) 104a and 104b of a material 104. The method comprising the steps of heating the material 104 and the weld 106 with a heating source 102, collecting an infrared radiation (infrared wavelengths) passing through the material on the second surface (second piece) 104b, obtaining an image (plurality of images/ thermal data) by a camera 108, and analyzing the image by a computer 112. This would imply, that the camera captures the weld/ weld pool image in its entirety (thermal image/ temperature of each portion of the weld pool).

For claims 4-5: it is inherent that, by using an infrared camera and obtaining a thermal image, the device is capable to determine temperature of each portion of the weld reflecting in pixels. The temperature and corresponding time (histogram) is compared to a threshold histogram (col. 1, lines 37-56, col. 5, line 48 and col. 8, lines 10-15) and a selected calibration standard (col. 4, line 67) to meet associated criteria.

For claim 7: the device can be used to determine the size (thus, inherently, width) of the weld and the quality (presence of cracks, voids, defects, discontinuities) of the bond (col. 7, lines 1-2) and, inherently, compare them to the threshold (standard) by means of the histogram.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the IR thermal data means, disclosed by Jones, so as to have a thermal image means, in order to enable the operator to obtain a visual

data of the weld by collecting the thermal radiation through the second piece, as taught by Shepard, so as to provide the operator with a visual thermal data which could allow to immediately see defects and lack of integrity of the weld, in order to take necessary actions.

Jones does not teach to provide a feedback signal to a weld controller to meet an associated criterion of weld, and modifying heat in response to the feedback signal.

Dostoomian discloses the device and method in the field of applicant's endeavor comprising welding together two materials in a localized spot by providing a heating energy (by spot welders), and monitoring the spot (pool) for quality by obtaining an IR energy (thermal data) from the pool. This would imply that the device has a means for obtaining the thermal data. The device comprises a controller which adjusting the heating energy (magnitude of the weld current) by obtaining an IR energy/ temperature from the welding tips, while the IR energy provides a measure of the temperature (thermal data) of the weld (col. 3, lines 5-6). The controller has a differential circuit for generating an error signal and apply (feedback) it to the input of the spot welder (heater) throughout the course of the welding operation (heating) in response to the thermal data /temperature evaluation of the weld as compared to the standard thermal history stored in a memory and controlling (modifying) the welding current (heating) as required (in response to the feedback signal).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add a control device with a feedback to the device, disclosed by Jones, so as to allow the operator to control defects, lack of integrity of the weld caused by improper welding process/ improper heating by controlling the weld temperature within predetermined (desired/ standard) limits.

Jones does not teach to simultaneously detecting/ obtaining IR data.

Chang discloses a device/ method for testing/ monitoring a joint by heating it and simultaneously detecting an IR emitted by the joint, creating a machine-readable IR profile (thermal image) and comparing it with a machine readable standard so as to determine the joint integrity and to identify a defective joint.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device, disclosed by Jones, so as to simultaneously heating and obtaining an image, as taught by Chang, so as to allow the operator to in real time analyze the image and take immediate actions simultaneously with heating the weld and thus, to avoid enhancing the defect in the weld by a possible overheating.

The method steps will be met during the normal operation of the device stated above.

3. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable Jones, Shepard, Dostoomian and Chang, as applied to claims 1-5, 7, 13-16, 18, 20, 26 above, and further in view of Kearney (U.S. 4446354).

Jones, Shepard, Dostoomian and Chang disclose the device/ method as stated above in paragraph 2.

They do not explicitly teach an alarm.

Kearney discloses a device in the field of applicant's endeavor. A radiation received from a weld 18 is sent (feedback) to a weld controller 30, which activates an alarm in response to determining that the difference between the received signal and the reference signal values exceeds a pre-selected (threshold) limit (does not meet an associated criterion). The alarm can interrupt the device.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device disclosed by Jones, Shepard, Dostoomian and Chang, so as to have an alarm, as taught by Kearney, in order to enable the device to interrupt welding should a failure occurs.

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The method steps will be met during the normal operation of the device stated above.

4. Claims 6, 8, 10-11, 17, 19, 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones, Schepard, Dostoomian and Chang, as applied to claims 1-5, 7, 13-16, 18, 20, 26 above, and further in view of Traub et al. (U.S. 4214164) [hereinafter Traub].

Jones, Schepard, Dostoomian and Chang disclose a device/ method as stated above in paragraph 2.

They do not explicitly teach the particular weld controller as claimed by applicant.

Traub teaches a device / method in the field of applicant's endeavor wherein, in an automatic mode, a thermal signal from a weld is compared to a signal recorded in memory (reference/ threshold), if the signal is higher or lower than the reference (does not meet an associated criterion), welding parameters are being adjusted by a (feedback) control circuitry (weld controller).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the controller of the device, disclosed by Jones, Schepard, Dostoomian and Chang, so as to have a feedback weld controller, as taught by Traub, in order to enable the device not only to detect failure but also to implement corrective functions.

The method steps will be met during the normal operation of the device stated above.

5. Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones, Schepard, Dostoomian and Chang as applied to claims 1-5, 7, 13-16, 18, 20, 26 above, and further in view of Ish-Shalom et al. (U.S. 6299346) [Ish-Shalom].

Jones, Schepard, Dostoomian and Chang disclose the device and method as stated above in paragraph 2.

They do not teach the limitations of claim 24.

Ish-Shalom discloses a device wherein in order to obtaining a correct temperature (thermal data) of a test sample (wafer), an IR wavelengths from the heating lamps cut off (filtered).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device, disclosed by Jones, Schepard, Dostoomian and Chang, so as to cut off the heating radiation from the final thermal data results, as taught by Ish-Shalom, in order to preserve the accuracy of the thermal data, as already suggested by Ish-Shalom.

The method steps will be met during the normal operation of the device stated above.

6. Claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones, Schepard, Dostoomian and Chang as applied to claims 1-5, 7, 13-16, 18, 20, 26 above, and further in view of Emmelmann (U.S. 6201211).

Jones, Schepard, Dostoomian and Chang disclose the device and method as stated above in paragraph 2.

They do not explicitly teach the limitations of claim 25.

Emmelmann discloses in Fig.1 a device in the field of applicant's endeavor comprising an up/ down movable laser welding head/ beam for properly focusing the laser beam. This would imply, that the level of laser energy changes with the laser beam movement.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device, disclosed by Jones, Schepard, Dostoomian and Chang, so as to have a movable laser welding beam, as taught by Emmelmann, in order to properly focus the laser beam over the weld, as already suggested by Emmelmann, in order to adjust the distance and thus, the laser energy / heat delivered to the weld.

7. Claims 1-5, 7, 13-16, 18, 20, 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schepard in view of Jones, Dostoomian, Chang and Emmelmann (U.S. 6201211).

Schepard discloses the device as claimed by applicant with the exception of the following: the particular material/ plastic to be welded; providing a feedback signal to a weld controller to meet an associated criterion of weld, and modifying heat in response to the feedback signal; simultaneously detecting/ obtaining IR data.

Jones discloses the device as claimed by applicant including the fact that the materials to be welded are plastic materials.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device and method disclosed by Schepard, so as to apply it to evaluate the welding process of the plastic material of Jones, because the plastic material is also needed to be evaluated for the weld quality, since a defective weld can cause a dramatic consequence, such as for example, breaking of plastic shower pipes can cause burning to a person.

Dostoomian discloses the device and method in the field of applicant's endeavor comprising welding together two materials in a localized spot by providing a heating energy (by spot welders), and monitoring the spot (pool) for quality by obtaining an IR energy (thermal data) from the pool. This would imply that the device has a means for obtaining the thermal data. The device comprises a controller which adjusting the heating energy (magnitude of the weld current) by obtaining an IR energy/ temperature from the welding tips, while the IR energy provides a measure of the temperature (thermal data) of the weld (col. 3, lines 5-6). The controller has a differential circuit for generating an error signal and apply (feedback) it to the input of the spot welder (heater) throughout the course of the welding operation (heating) in response to the thermal data /temperature evaluation of the weld as compared to the standard thermal history stored in a memory and controlling (modifying) the welding current (heating) as required (in response to the feedback signal).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add a control device with a feedback to the device, disclosed by Schepard, so as to allow the operator to control defects, lack of integrity of the weld caused by improper welding process/ improper heating by controlling the weld temperature within predetermined (desired/ standard) limits.

Chang discloses a device/ method for testing/ monitoring a joint by heating it and simultaneously detecting an IR emitted by the joint, creating a machine-readable IR profile (thermal image) and comparing it with a machine readable standard so as to determine the joint integrity and to identify a defective joint.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device, disclosed by Schepard, so as to simultaneously heating and obtaining an image, as taught by Chang, so as to allow the operator to in real time analyze the image and take immediate actions simultaneously with heating the weld and thus, to avoid enhancing the defect in the weld by a possible overheating.

8. Claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schepard, Jones, Dostoomian, Chang as applied to claims 1-5, 7, 13-16, 18, 20, 26 above, and further in view of Emmelman.

Schepard, Jones Dostoomian and Chang disclose the device and method as stated above.

They do not explicitly teach the limitations of claim 25.

Emmelmann discloses in Fig.1 a device in the field of applicant's endeavor comprising an up/ down movable laser welding head/ beam for properly focusing the laser beam. This would imply, that the level of laser energy changes with the laser beam movement.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device, disclosed by Schepard, so as to have a movable laser welding beam, as taught by Emmelmann, in order to properly focus the laser beam over the weld, as already suggested by Emmelmann, in order to adjust the distance and thus, the laser energy/ heat delivered to the weld.

Response to Arguments

9. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-8, 12-21 and 24 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection necessitated by the present amendment.

Conclusion

10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The prior art cited in the PTO-892 and not mentioned above disclose related devices and methods.

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Takeda et al. (U.S. 6462299) discloses the device and method in the field of applicant's endeavor comprising pieces 1a and 1b abutting each other for forming a weld (pool) and heating them with an induction heating apparatus 9 while the temperature is raised to a predetermined (annealing) temperature. This would imply, that the heating and temperature measurements (thermal image) are done simultaneously.

Geler et al. (U.S. 5474225) discloses the device and method in the field of applicant's endeavor. Geler monitors a just completed weld.

Jones (U.S. 4224499) discloses the device and method in the field of applicant's endeavor comprising a copper and an aluminum pieces butt-welded. The process involving heating and melting (pool formation) their interface. Jones does not teach to take IR images simultaneously with heating.

Juret et al. (U.S. 6177649) teaches to monitor a welding process by obtaining thermal images by using an IR camera in real time (simultaneously). Juret teaches to monitor the quality of weld and control the welding process. If a defect of the weld is noted (weld does not meet a required criteria), the weld head should be repaired (changing variables).

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to the Examiner Verbitsky who can be reached at (571) 272-2253 Monday through Friday 8:00 to 4:00 ET.

GKV

Gail Verbitsky

Primary Patent Examiner, TC 2800



February 24, 2006